SNRP Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting Minutes: Wondering how to document your meeting minutes?

These days, many of us find ourselves in the position of taking meeting minutes without a clue of how to go about it. The following is a guide for making this task easier:

Minutes of meetings form a historical record of a group's work. They serve as a record of decisions and details when people's memories fail or when they disagree. They remind people of assignments they've taken on and deadlines they need to meet. They inform those not present of what happened at the meeting. They give future members of the organization a way to build on past successes and avoid reinventing the wheel.

Meeting minutes are very important. Minutes are considered legal documents by the auditors, IRS and courts, and they represent the actions of a board. Many assert that if it's not in the minutes, it didn't happen.

There is no standardized level of content and format for minutes. In courts, as important as what you did is that you were reasonable when you did it. Therefore, sufficient information should be included to describe how members reasonably came to reasonable decisions.

- Include the name of the organization, date and time of meeting, who called it to order, who attended and if there was a quorum, all motions made, any conflicts of interest or abstainments from voting, when the meeting ended and who developed the minutes.

- Summarize the discussion, capturing key points and decisions reached. When someone takes on an assignment, a deadline is set, or other important agreements are reached, make sure to record them. This will serve as a reminder when the minutes are read later on.

- Separate fact from opinion. Facts are objective and indisputable; opinions are personal views.

- Don't make the mistake of recording every single comment, but concentrate on getting the gist of the discussion and taking enough notes to summarize it later. Remember that minutes are the official record of what happened, not what was said, at a meeting.

- Don't wait too long to type up the minutes, and be sure to have them approved by the chair or facilitator before distributing them to the attendees.

Distribute the minutes before the next meeting. This gives people a reminder of assignments and deadlines, as well as when and where the next meeting is. Any corrections or additions should be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting. The group should then approve the minutes, meaning that they agree that they are accurate and complete, either as read or as amended.

1. Introductions and Opening Remarks
2. Scientific Progress Reports (PI's and collaborators) – scientific progress, achieving performance measures (e.g., papers, abstracts, publications, posters, presentations).
3. Problems and strategies for resolving issues.
4. Administrative Issues
   a. Budgets (e.g., consortium agreements, re-budgeting, streamlining procurement)
   b. Update on personnel (e.g., new hires, recruitment of senior neuroscientist)
   c. Responsible Conduct of Research (e.g., plan for training PI's and collaborators, plan for starting RCR course)
   d. Technology Transfer (e.g., schedule for visits, technology transferred in both directions)
   e. Seminars Series
   f. SAC (e.g., next meeting date, topics to be discussed).
   g. PAC (e.g., final roster, next meeting date, plan for compilation of progress report, circulation of CV's).

As included in the Notice of Grant Award (NGA) under the Terms and Conditions or as verbally communicated, SAC meetings should be held as often as possible with as many members present as is feasible. All collaborators will participate in bi-monthly SAC meetings either in person or via teleconference. Meetings should be scheduled in advance, a written agenda provided to all potential participants, and minutes should be taken. Minutes should be compiled on a <u>quarterly basis</u> (every three months or four times a budget period) and submitted to the appropriate NINDS OMHR Program Director as a single document. Please do not send a single document for each meeting of the SAC. Minutes should be assembled in one flowing WORD document with the most recent minutes up front. Please "cc" Dianna Jessee at <u>dj35j@nih.gov</u> when forwarding your minutes to NINDS OMHR.

<u>EXAMPLE</u>: If your NGA has a start date of **09/01/05**, then your quarterly SAC minutes are due by:

11/30/05
02/28/06
05/31/06
08/31/06